

## Healthy Communities / Healthy Youth Initiative

Asset of the Month – School Addendum: March 2012

### #19 Religious Community

#### Weekly Announcement / Activity

##### Week of March 5

##### ***Community Cafeteria***

Focus: Youth identify opportunities for involvement in their community.

**Activity:** Explain that one way a community shows how it values young people is by offering activities for them to get involved in. Mention several type of activities that communities offer (possibilities include sports, arts, religious programs, hobbies, social action, service, educational enrichment, and business) and then ask youth to form 4-8 teams according to types of activities they're most interested in. Tell team members they should work together to identify organizations and clubs in the community that offer activities in their chosen area. They can find this information through the community newspaper, chamber of commerce, city hall, their school counselor's office, the library, and community education offices. Depending on how much time you have, you may have to use 2 group sessions to complete the activity – youth could conduct research during the first session and follow through with the bonus idea (following the discussion questions) during the second session. Another option is to have young people spend 1 session visiting your city hall, the library, or school and gathering information before getting together again to present their findings to the group. Once teams finish, have them report what they found to the larger group. Write each team's findings on the chalkboard or newsprint.

##### Discussion Questions:

- What types of activities are most available for youth your age? Where are the gaps?
- Were you surprised by what you found?
- Overall, by what you see offered to youth, how much do you think the community values youth? Why?
- Which community organizations seem to value youth most? Which don't value youth much at all? Why do you think this is so?

##### **Bonus Idea**

Depending on how much information youth gather, they may want to host an activity fair for other youth to attend and learn how they can get involved in their communities. The youth group members could also write an article for a school newspaper.

##### Week of March 12

##### ***Diverse Role Models***

Focus: Youth study the religious involvement of role models.

**Activity:** Have youth identify role models who make or have made the world a better place. They may mention Nobel Peace Prize winners, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rumi, Gandhi, Mother Teresa, the Dalai Lama, or more local examples.

Ask youth to form teams of 3. Have each team discuss what they know about one role model and that person's involvement in religion. (If time allows, provide reference books or access to the Internet for research.)

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Discussion Questions:

- Of the role models named, how involved are they in religion? What impact does that involvement seem to have on them?
- Does learning about role models' religious involvement change your view of them? Why or Why not?
- Is religious involvement usually positive or negative? Why?
- Is it important to know a person's religious involvement before deciding whether to look up to her or him? Why or why not?
- The principle of separation of church and state, which forbids the government from endorsing or promotion religion, can be found in the U.S. Constitution. How do you feel when leaders make political decisions based on their religious beliefs?
- How important is religious involvement to you? Why?

### **Week of March 19**

#### ***Time for What?***

Focus: Youth talk about how they spend their time each day.

**Activity:** Have youth make a sign for each of the following categories (or others that are appropriate for your group): sleep, eat, school, work, homework, extracurricular activities, religious activities, time with friends, play video games, have time alone, watch TV. Have youth hang each of these signs on the walls of your room. Spread the signs throughout the room.

Have everyone gather in the center of the room. Say "I'm going to start naming hours of the day. Think about what you're usually doing at that time, then run to the appropriate sign and stand there until I name another time of day – then you'll switch to something else."

Continue naming each hour until you get back to midnight. Watch where youth congregate and for how long. Then repeat the activity using a weekend day.

Discussion Questions:

- Where do you spend most of your time on school days? Why? Weekends? Why?
- Are there other things you spend lots of time doing that aren't included in the signs in this room? What are they?
- What kinds of activities do you do that are challenging and stimulating?
- What do you consider to be a big waste of time? Why?
- If you could choose how much time you would spend on each activity, which activities would you shorten? Why? Which ones would you lengthen? Why?

Bonus Idea: After the above activity have students fill in the blanks below for 3-4 activities that they are involved with.

Activity Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Hours per week: \_\_\_\_\_

How it helps me: \_\_\_\_\_

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